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ABSTRACT

This final report of a project to serve culturally/linguistically diverse (C/LD) children (ages birth to 5) in Erie County (New York) presents a project overview, a summary of project outcomes, results of agency and parent evaluation, and conclusions. Project CROSSROADS (Cooperative Transagency Program for Preschool Culturally/Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Children), had four main goals: (1) development of a comprehensive case management system for C/LD children; (2) identification of unserved C/LD preschoolers with handicapping or at-risk conditions; (3) provision of support services to families, agency staff and caregivers; and (4) development of a regional resource network. Major program successes are identified including continuation of the demonstration model; recognized success of the parent partner approach; continuation of the multicultural task force; and effectiveness of inservice training. Problems are also identified. These included: limited C/LD enrollment and resources; start-up and enrollment maintenance problems; continuous staff training; absence of specialists; expense; recruitment of cultural informants; staff recruitment; and limitations in direct service delivery. Recommendations for replication are also offered. Appended are the program's theoretical/philosophical rationale and recollections of a parent partner. (DB)

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FINAL REPORT

CROSSROADS: Cooperative Transagency Program for
Preschool Culturally/Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Children

Office of Special Education
(CFDA 84.024)

November, 1987- November, 1990

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BACKGROUND

In 1987, the year CROSSROADS (CR) began, funding for Western New York preschool exceptional children ages birth-5 was provided from Sec. 236 of County Family Court System. Through this plan 50% of the funds were provided by New York State special education funds and 50% was paid by the County under Section 4406 of Education Law. In July, 1989, under Section 4410 of the Education Law, funding for special needs children ages 3-4 changed. These changes required that 3-4 year-old-children be evaluated at a state approved evaluation site which was also an approved provider of service. In addition, each school system was required to establish a Committee on Preschool Special Education designed to determine classification, level of services to be provided, and location of services for special needs children.

In their desire to maximize the potential success of funding changes for services to preschool special needs populations, the Western New York area was quick to recognize a major barrier to desired success--responding to needs of preschool special needs children of cultural/linguistically diverse backgrounds. The extent of ethnic diversity in Western New York is easily seen in the Buffalo metropolitan area in which over 70 different languages are commonly spoken. Such diversity is similarly reflected in the ethnic makeup of special education classes throughout New York State. Statewide, culturally/linguistically diverse (C/LD) students composed of Black, Hispanic, American Indian, Asian American, Alaskan, and Pacific Islanders comprise nearly 48% of k-12 special education classes (Chinn, 1984).

In light of the importance of years prior to formal schooling upon later success, P.L. 99.457 mandates that appropriate educational services to special needs preschool children be addressed. Yet, resources for C/LD preschool special needs children who comprise a high percentage of special needs populations have been extremely limited in the Western New York community. Services, where available, are generally provided through county-funded agencies. Since preschool special needs children are, for the most part, at home, identification of these eligible children and provision of appropriate services by predominantly Anglo, monocultural service providers present particular difficulties.

In light of emerging funding mandates as well as in recognition of problems likely to emerge in responding to the special needs of increasing numbers of C/LD populations in our community, the Western New York area began exploring possible options. In the mid-80's the Erie County Developmental Disabilities Planning Council Educational Sub-committee commissioned a "Multi-cultural Task Force" to explore ways to more appropriately respond to the peculiar needs of increasing numbers of special needs preschool children of C/LD backgrounds. Out of this committee, represented by a group of seven preschool service providers responsible for providing over 50% of the the services to preschool special needs children in Western New York, the CR concept was born. Under the leadership of Dr. Isaura Barrera Metz a proposal for a demonstration project was submitted

to the Handicapped Children's Early Education Programs (HCEEP) component of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation. It was subsequently funded as one of six community involvement demonstration projects. Language Development Program (LDP), a major service provider in our area, volunteered to serve as the fiscal agent for the demonstration project and a member of this organization agreed to serve as an interagency coordinator.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

CROSSROADS was conceived as a cooperative, multiagency program designed to coordinate and deliver services to (C/LD) preschool handicapped and at-risk children ages birth-5 and their families. Its intent was to augment existing services rather than to develop a new and separate service delivery system. CR staff was, therefore, trained to work as a team to assist local preschool programs in more appropriately serving C/LD preschool children with handicapping conditions. Services included working directly with children and their families and working both directly and indirectly with the staff of participating agencies/other community services accessed by these families (e.g. physicians, audiologists, respite care staff).

The transagency approach of CR was designed specifically to assist C/LD children and their families in receiving appropriate services in the least restrictive setting, and enabling existing service providers to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to serve C/LD populations more appropriately. As a result, C/LD families were not restricted to a single program, but were able to receive appropriate C/LD services across the range of programs available to families with handicapped children. (See Appendix A, Theoretical/Philosophical Rationale.)

Project Goals

Specific goals established to guide CR in this transagency, multicultural preschool special needs initiative were as follows:

1. To develop a comprehensive case management and student services program.
2. To identify unserved children with C/LD handicapping or at-risk conditions.
3. To provide corollary support services to families, staff, and caregivers.
4. To develop a regional resource network for the dissemination of needed information and materials.

Project Components

Three major program components were established to accomplish the above goals.

Child Services

This component was designed to address delivery of educational, therapeutic, medical, and other services to C/LD exceptional children who were currently enrolled in programs of one of the participating agencies or children who were newly identified as needing services. The child service component included both direct as well as indirect services. Through direct services CR staff provided cultural and linguistically specific services not currently available through other sources (e.g. assessments involving use of non-English language, assessment of child's cultural proficiency needs, interpretation of culture-based behavior patterns, provision of language/culture informants, and development of basic concepts through child's home language.) In delivering these services, CR staff worked with the children on a resource room basis and/or in the current intervention settings.

Indirect services to children involved using a transdisciplinary method with agency-based staff to assist them in integrating the ALERTA Multicultural Curriculum into their ongoing services. This integration ensured that ongoing interventions were appropriately structured and that the children's culture and language were accessed as resources for further growth. Indirect services also included participation in IEP development, lesson planning, assistance with selection of materials, and/or working with psychologists in collecting and interpreting behavioral data.

Family Services

This component addressed the delivery of services to parents and families of C/LD exceptional preschoolers. Services within this component were directed toward helping families access needed services, understand due process, and participate optimally in their children's programs.

Direct services to families included provision of a "Parent Partner" and other CR staff to act as parent advocates and work directly with parents and families to assist them in identifying needed services, completing necessary intake procedures, and becoming informed participants in IEP development and implementation. These services included things like attending IEP meetings with parents who were unfamiliar with the language and/or process of such meetings, observing in the classroom with parents, and assisting parents with home follow up activities.

Indirect services involved CR staff working with agency-based staff and other community service providers to assist them in understanding cross-cultural communication and the acculturation process as it related to working with families. These services included things such as teaching staff non-English vocabulary supporting communication with families, identifying culturally based roles and rules regarding specific behaviors (e.g. maintaining optimum distance for interpersonal conversation, eye contact, pacing of meetings) so that miscommunication did not occur.

Staff Services

This component involved the training and technical assistance provided to project staff, agency-based staff, and other interested caregivers in order to assist them in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to develop appropriate services for C/LD populations. In addition to workshops and individual training, this component also included dissemination of materials through the regional network (e.g. books, films, tapes, translated forms.).

Project Resources

The primary staff for this project included a project director, a combination administrative assistant/parent partner, a parent partner, itinerant multicultural instruction specialists, a multicultural home-school interventionist, and a pool of 24 language/culture informants representing Laotian, Polish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Cambodian, Hispanic, African-American, and other cultures. The informants provided a wide array of services as needed in support of the project goals, and were used on an "as needed" contract basis.

SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF EXCEPTIONAL PRESCHOOL CHILDREN SERVICE PROVIDERS

CR was created out of growing recognition among special educators of the challenges inherent in serving the special needs of culturally/linguistically diverse exceptional preschool children and their families. In order to appreciate the project outcomes documented in this report, it is important to provide anecdotal information regarding the range of cultural diversity presented by the children served.

The challenges and frustrations which inspired CR are typified in vignettes of the following children as described by agency personnel in follow-up interviews after the conclusion of the project. Agencies were asked to describe a particular child who was representative of special challenges they encounter with culturally/linguistically diverse children in their respective programs, how CR supported the needs of this child, and what would happen to such children in the absence of CR.

Mohamed J.

Mohamed was a one-year old multiply handicapped Arabic child. Mohamed comes from a monolingual (Arabic) family with traditional values. In this culture the father/eldest son are the primary decision-makers. Providing appropriate services for this child presented special problems to our agency because the father delegated responsibilities relating to Mohamed's education to the mother. Mohamed's mother, on the other hand, was unable to make decisions regarding things like enrollment without consulting with her

husband who philosophically opposed formal educational services for his son at this age.

CR provided an invaluable service in assisting us with this very difficult situation. First of all, CR provided a translator and transportation for the mother's initial tour of the school. The CR "parent partner" then made a visit to the home to explain in more detail services available to her son. In addition, CR provided transportation for the mother to/from our agency, translated evaluation data, assisted with explaining implications/prescriptions growing from our assessment, and served as a member of Mohamed's evaluation team. The parent partner also accompanied the mother and child to school to act as a translator and cultural informant for nearly 2 months after initial enrollment and accompanied the teacher during home visits. Finally the CR parent partner was especially effective in communicating Arabic culture to the staff.

Over the project CR has demonstrated an amazing ability to recruit staff (especially cultural informants) from low-incidence cultures. This service alone has greatly enhanced our ability to deliver appropriate Special Education services to our children.

At this time, other than children who are from a Hispanic culture, it will be extremely difficult to provide services other than simple translation without CR. That is certainly only a small portion of what the staff, student and family will need to maximize our potential. Thus, in the coming years perhaps our greatest loss will be in the readily available pool of cultural informants which CR so effectively provided.

Juan

Juan, from a Spanish-dominant home, was identified as needing speech/language services. Primarily because of these difficulties, Juan was non-verbal and non-interactive in his regular preschool. Our regular preschool staff was unable to contact Juan's parents concerning his difficulties because a phone was not in the home. The trained staff from CR, however, made a home visit and obtained parent permission to conduct a formal evaluation of Juan. They provided transportation to the evaluation session and actively participated in evaluating Juan, obtained necessary parent information, and provided parents with information about services we provided. Because of this evaluation, Juan was enrolled in our program. Yet, recognizing problems our staff were likely to encounter in working with Juan, CR assigned a Spanish speaking cultural informant to our program. Juan thrived in an environment where his Spanish language and culture was respected. He eventually entered a program offering a regular kindergarten curriculum with bilingual support services.

Because our agency has absorbed so much of the CR program and philosophy, our program will be much better prepared to deal with C/LD special needs children than we

were prior to this program. The primary setback in the absence of CR will be the inability to provide mass screenings to C/LD school children.

Chin

Chin was a three-year-old Laotian child. She came to us from a foster placement. Chin was seriously delayed in language ability for her age, yet we were unable to determine the extent of her delay without the support of a CR interpreter.

CR was especially helpful in providing an interpreter to work with the foster parents. With Crossroad's help, it was determined the current foster placement was not appropriate for Chin. Another placement was found.

Thanks to Crossroad's approach to dealing with C/LD special needs children, we now have a model for action. We hope to continue the CR approach as much as funding will support.

Sally

Sally and her family were Laotian. Sally's difficulties were identified at birth and she was enrolled in our infant program. There were 5 other children in the family and the father of 2 of the children had some knowledge of English. This family lived in a poor neighborhood away from other Laotians. The family lived in a great deal of fear of vandals in the area but did not have the resources to move.

Sally's mother came with her to the program but she showed no understanding without an interpreter from CR. Before CR we were not sure we communicated everything, or at times anything. We felt the mother did not even understand why her baby was enrolled in our program.

The cultural informant/interpreter from CR assisted during home visits. These visits made programming possible for Sally and her family. We could have done nothing without this informant's help. Specific components of the Individual Education Plan provided by the therapist and teachers would have been impossible without this informant's assistance.

In the case of Sally, we would not have been able to provide appropriate services for this family without CR. We have expanded our own consultant's time in our budget so we can hire such services. We would have to expand our orientation time in using such consultants. Working with families who are culturally diverse will take a great deal more time without CR. Yet, thanks to CR, we now know how to go about developing a plan.

Frank

Frank was of Hispanic background. His mother was Spanish dominant and his father was bilingual English-

dominant. Frank displayed mastery of the English language. Frank's vocabulary and comprehension appeared to be age-appropriate in the classroom. CR evaluation, however, revealed deficits in both languages. In addition, it was not clear which language was being used in the home. CR helped Frank become more comfortable with Spanish use in the classroom. CR also assisted in determining the home language.

Samuel

Samuel was a special child whose family was from Puerto Rico. Since Samuel was extremely quiet, it was very difficult for the staff to determine what language was dominant for him—let alone, the problem of knowing if he had a speech problem.

CR came to our rescue with this child by screening him in both English and Spanish. It was found that his dominant language was English and because of specific difficulties with this language, he was referred for a formal evaluation.

Since the lead agency has taken over a bit of Crossroad's services, we may be able to cope for a bit of time. Had CR not gotten the ball rolling, however, Samuel would easily slip through institutional cracks and create major burdens upon society in the future.

Yi

Yi was a Cantonese child found to be seriously speech impaired. Both parents worked full-time and the child was being cared for by a paternal grandmother who spoke and understood no English. English was never spoken in the home.

CR provided a very wonderful interpreter who came to our program about twice each week. In addition to helping with assessments, the interpreter worked with teachers in the classroom. He also served as a very effective liaison between home and school.

Now that CR has ended, we will not have the availability of a Cantonese interpreter to help with the above tasks. This situation makes critical communications between the home and schools extremely difficult -- especially for those families unable to read or write English. Just this past week we have encountered another problem such as this. Seeing how effective communication can be with support of CR has left us extremely frustrated.

Bi-sho

Bi-sho is Bengali. Her family was spending 4 years in America so her father could complete his degree at State University of New York at Buffalo. We certainly had little staff support for clients from Bangladesh. Thus, numerous language barriers arose in working with both the child and the mother. We had absolutely no idea of native

customs/values of this family (e.g. child upbringing, values such things as food, toilet training, dress, etc.) which differed widely from ours. Even CR did not have the specific resources to assist us with this particular family. We were able to determine from a variety of sources bits of information (e.g. While we were initiating toilet training at age 3, the Bangladesh toilet training is begun around age 5). Yet, we were for the most part unable to maximize the potential of our agency with this particular child.

A number of interesting issues emerge from the above vignettes. First of all, children chosen to "typify" problems supported by this project involve a number of children from low-incidence cultures (Arabic, Laotian and Cantonese). These selections suggest that early childhood special educators are beginning to recognize that problems involving minority preschool special needs children extend far beyond Hispanic/Black cultures commonly recognized in traditional service delivery systems. Moreover, recent population trends suggest problems described by service providers above are destined to get much more severe in the years ahead.

Secondly, the above vignettes suggest that in trying to support the special needs of C/LD preschool children help is urgently needed in at least three areas of service delivery-- (1) the home and family (2) direct services to children in the classroom and (3) culturally-relevant support for the program staff.

Finally, when considering the rapid increase in C/LD populations in the United States, (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1989) the inadequacies expressed by the above agency personnel in their abilities to provide appropriate mandated services, and the likelihood of wasted human and financial resources because of our lack of preparation to deal with these population emerge as major challenges. Information obtained from the CR demonstration project provides a great deal of direction concerning the successes/failures of a program designed to meet this rapidly developing challenge.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Goal 1. Development of comprehensive case management and student services

Activities/Achievements

This objective was established to provide an array of services in support of the special needs of the 160 minority students enrolled in programs of participating agencies at the onset of the program. Services provided in support of identified children included: referral services, intake, assessment, placement IEP development and implementation, and reviews.

To obtain an indication of the types and extent of services provided in managing identified children, a content analysis of 10 random cases was explored. Data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Child/Family Contact Per Child

Activity	Child #									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Phone Contacts	5	10	6	4	17	0	4	6	0	5
Home Visits	13	17	10	8	4	7	3	2	10	8
Home Visits No Response	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	1
Minutes Spent Home Visits	490	1240	375	135	115	90	60	75	140	80
Doctor Visits	4	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minutes Spent Dr. Visits	330	180	170	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Letters Home	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Site visits/ Intakes/eval. meeting with agency/staff/ doctors/ IEPs	3	4	3	2	4	0	1	2	1	2
Minutes Spent on Above	330	525	255	180	270	0	120	195	120	170
Direct Child Contacts	0	25	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Minutes Spent With Child	0	2190	0	0	450	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL CONTACTS:	29	60	22	14	28	7	8	10	9	14
TOTAL CONTACT MINUTES:	820	4135	740	335	855	90	180	270	260	310

As one would expect, great differences in services/time were observed in services to children and families. Case # 6, for example required only 7 home visits which required about 1 hour and 30 minutes total. In contrast, case #2 required extensive

resources from all of CR's services. Total time required nearly 69 hours (4135 minutes). Likewise, extensive direct services to child 2 was required while 8 of the other children were able to receive appropriate services through more indirect and time-effective methods. Yet, in all cases, significant efforts were made in providing personal home contacts through the phone (57, 8.2/case) or home visits (82, 8/case).

Much of the above case management services were facilitated by Parent Partners. Project Parent Partners were responsible for identifying family service needs and for assisting primary caregivers in becoming more informed and effective service consumers within the existing service delivery systems. Other activities included supporting home programs, accompanying parents to IEP meetings, acting as mediators to ensure appropriate communication between parents and service providers, assisting parents in completing necessary intake procedures for a particular service, and a host of emergent activities. As discussed in a subsequent section of this report, Parent Partners was perceived as one of the most successful components of this project. (Insight into problems/issues associated with this component is seen in Appendix B, "Recollections of a Parent Partner.")

Problems/Issues

It was anticipated that direct services to children within this goal would be more extensive. However, time expended in management of cases in identifying children, Goal 2, severely constrained the availability of human resources for such direct services.

Goal 2. Identification of unserved C/LD children with handicapping or at-risk conditions.

Activities/Achievements

During the course of this 3-year project, 213 children were referred to CR. The ethnic backgrounds of these children are seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Ethnic Background of Children Referred to CR

<u>C/LD Background</u>	<u>Number</u>
Hispanic	189
Arabic	15
Chinese	3
Korean	2

Indian	2
Laotian	1
Vietnamese	1

Total: 213

As can be seen above, the majority (89%) of children referred to CR were of Hispanic backgrounds. Despite the overwhelming majority of Hispanic children, challenges presented by non-Hispanic children and families were no less significant. When cooperating agency directors were asked at the conclusion of the project to provide a vignette of a C/LD special needs child they had worked with, only 2 of 8 examples were those of Hispanic children. Through these vignettes, as well as through other comments, service providers expressed increasing concern for problems presented by special needs preschoolers from low-incidence cultures. Furthermore, recent projections provided by the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (1989) suggest that such concerns are likely to become more serious in the years to come. These projections suggest:

Asian NELBs [non-English-language-background] rise steadily from 1.8 million in 1976 to 1.9 million in 1980, 2 million in 1985, 2.1 million in 1990, and 2.2 million in 1995.

Non-Spanish and non-Asian NELBs (combined) increase from 15.5 million in 1976 to 16.3 million in 1980, 17 million in 1985, 17.8 million in 1990, 18.5 million in 1995, and 19 million in 2000.

...The number of NELBs in the 0-4-year-old band is projected to rise steadily from 1.8 million in 1976 to 2 million in 1980, 2.4 million in 1985, and reach a plateau of 2.6 million in 1990. (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, n.d.)

Low-incidence cultural groups presented numerous concerns to service providers. In this project, for example, special problems were presented with the Arabic children. While 15 Arabic children were referred to CR, for example, only 9 were screened because 6 parents would not provide permission. Furthermore, although low-incidence C/LD groups provided great concern for cooperating agencies, not enough children were enrolled to develop the comprehensive programs needed to maximize the educational development of these children. It may be that until larger numbers of low-incidence preschool populations emerge, subcontracting through a program such as CR or pooling resources to obtain sufficient community resources may be most productive.

In addition to demonstrating special difficulties presented to service agencies by low-incidence groups, this project also demonstrated the tremendous need for increased services to high-

incidence groups such as Hispanics.

Finally, the numbers of children/families in need of CR services from the eight cooperating agencies far exceeded the project's initial expectations and resources. Thus, no major efforts were devoted to publicizing CR services outside of participating agencies. Rather, the project requested that these agencies refer all children from homes where other language was spoken for screening. Because of its nature, the majority of referrals were received from the Head Start Program of Erie County. Of those referred during the 2 implementational years of the project, the disposition of cases can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Disposition of Children Referred to CR

<u>Disposition</u>	<u>Number</u>
Screened/evaluated and requiring referrals and/or special support from CR.	114
Screened/potential problems indicated and re-check recommended	17
Screened and no referral needed	45
Screened but not referred by conclusion of project	18
	TOTAL: 213

As can be seen from the above table, 54% of children referred (113 children) were screened/evaluated and required subsequent referral and/or extensive follow-up support from CR. Support of children/families who were determined in greatest need included a wide array of services such as: parent partners, explanations, home visits, accompaniment to service providers, phone assistance, linkage with other services), child screening, child evaluation, assistance specific to CSE/CPSE, transportation, in-classroom assistance for children. Seventeen referrals were screened and while urgent attention was not required, potential difficulties warranted recommendations for future re-screenings. Forty five children (21%) were determined to be functioning on age level and no further support/referral was needed. Nineteen children (9%) dropped out of program while screening was in progress or parental permission to screen was denied. The final 18 children were screened but because of limited staff and the upcoming conclusion, referrals were not made.

To provide an indication of the severity of problems identified through CR screenings, assessment data from 106 children referred in 1988 were analyzed (Metz, 1989). These results and those from 1989 are seen in Table 4.

Table 4
Language Assessment Results for Children
Referred to CR in 1988 & 1989

YR Referred*	Screened	Non-LEP	LEP No Other Lang. Probs.	LEP + other Other Lang. Probs.
1988 106	90 (85%)	21 (23%)	69 (65%)	40 (38%)
1989 63	34** (54%)	4 (18%)	0 (0%)	30 (88%)

* All children from homes where Spanish or Arabic was spoken were referred for screening; estimated 95% from low-income homes.

** Screened in order of severity of referral concerns due to limited time and resources.

All students from homes where either Arabic or Spanish was spoken, whether it was the dominant language or not, were referred for screenings. The Head Start program from which these children were referred report that 97% of their enrollment met low-income criteria. Of the 106 children referred in 1988, 90 were actually screened. Sixty-nine, or 65% of those were found to be LEP and 40 (38%) were found to exhibit both limited proficiency in English and a lack of age-appropriate proficiency in their first or strongest language. These figures indicate that approximately 58% of the LEP children also had additional non-language problems such as those associated with risk factors associated in lower socio-economic status (e.g. poor nutrition, lack of prenatal care).

Data on screenings conducted in 1989-90 is available only for 34 or 54% of the 63 children referred. As time and human resources were encumbered by previous referrals, fewer cases could be served. The cases that were screened were selected based on the severity of referral concerns and, thus, show skewed data.

The 1988 data, along with similar dated reported earlier by Metz (1984), suggest two problems: (1) the number of LEP children with handicapping conditions in the area of speech/language appears to be increasing, and (2) the percentage of these

children in the general LEP population is substantially greater than the overall percentage of handicapped children in the total school population of two area school districts. Though the reason for this disparity has not been specifically addressed in the research arena, it may be reasonable to assume that a higher concentration of risk factors exists for the Head Start population (e.g., factors associated with low socioeconomic status, decreased availability of appropriate services; increased stress of acculturation and second language acquisition; lack of the experiential background assumed by typical school curriculum.)

Thus, it appears that a significant number of preschool LEP children also have or are at-risk for handicapping conditions in the area of speech-language. These conditions, if not addressed, are likely to inhibit normal acquisition of any language and will set the child up for subsequent school failure. This poor language acquisition may also result in the almost stereotypical profile of a child who "can't speak either language" (i.e., functions academically similarly to a child with mental retardation or learning disabilities).

Cummins, (1984) suggests that without appropriate intervention, a LEP child with language delay/disorder will enter a pre-kindergarten or kindergarten setting where, in a setting with 25-30 other children, he/she will be expected to use language skills to begin learning readiness and other pre-academic content. Even when such a setting provides native language and/or ESL, the child's inadequate skills in any language will affect his ability to understand and learn the presented material.

Problems/Issues:

The extensive numbers of children being referred to the project was unanticipated. As a result, resources originally slated for direct services had to be diverted to providing screenings.

A second major problem was the unanticipated number of children needing comprehensive bilingual speech/language and other evaluations. This placed a severe drain on the project's human and time resources, resulting in a service backlog.

Goal 3. Corollary Support Services to Families, Staff and Caregivers

Activities/Achievements

Numerous activities were conducted toward the achievement of this goal. Specific activities included things like assistance to families concerning the negotiation of various phases of the special education process, home support of IEPs, assistance in coordinating services from several agencies and referral to non-sponsor agencies when necessary.

This goal was greatly aided by the help of language/cultural informants. Table 5 presents a description of the range of services provided by these resources and time required for the services.

Table 5

Language/Cultural Informant Services

Informant	#Families Served	Dir.Svs. Tng. Hrs.	Total Hrs.
1	1	5	5
2	1	10	14.5
3	2	79	79.0
4	1	5	6.5
5	1	100.5	100.5
6	2	10	16.5
7	1	67	67
8	1	128.25	129.75
9	1	19.5	19.5
10	1	60	60
11	1	6	6
12	-	--	13
13	-	--	238.25
14	-	--	105
15	-	--	92
16	-	--	123
17	-	--	2.5
18	-	--	12
19	-	--	20
20	-	--	10
21	-	--	10
22	-	--	10
23	-	--	10
24	-	--	20
Total	13	490.25	679.75

As can be seen above, 24 cultural informants were used to assist 13 families. A total of 490.25 hours were spent in support of families served. In addition, 679.75 hours were spent by informants in providing training services (e.g. information on a variety of cultures, developing curriculum, assisting in bilingual evaluations, and help in providing speech/language protocols.

Problems/Issues

Without the help and support of these cultural specialists, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to provide intake evaluations in an appropriate manner. These people spent a great deal of time helping to explain available services to families serving as intermediaries between staff and children and assisting teachers working with children in the actual classroom.

(Significant efforts were expended in recruitment of informants from low-incidence cultures (e.g. Chinese, Arabic, Lao), as well as in training once recruited since, for some of these groups, it was not possible to find persons already familiar with the special education program. (See Critical Features Monograph, Appendix C.)

Goal 4: Development of a regional resource network for the dissemination of needed information and materials.

Activities/Achievements

Prior to CR, no singular resource center for obtaining information regarding the optimal education of C/LD children was available in the Western New York area. Yet, through CR's efforts, significant strides have been made toward providing urgently-needed resource assistance. Specifically, CR has provided help in this regard through (1) the creation of a multi-cultural task force (2) the development of a host of relevant resource materials (both commercially purchased as well as those developed by CR staff), and (3) the creation of a list of "Cultural Informants" with expertise in the cultures of increasing numbers of clients from low-incidence cultural backgrounds (e.g. Bengali, Arabic, Asian).

(In compliance with 99-457, New York established Regional Planning Groups to plan for implementation phase of this law. CR, under the leadership of Dr. Metz, headed up the Multicultural component for the Western NY Regional Planning Group. This group was charged with identifying needs, barriers and recommendations related to the needs of birth-2 C/LD children with special needs. In addition to meeting the requirements of the Regional Planning Group, Dr. Metz used the CR framework as a device for keeping this productive group of professionals together throughout the project period to explore problems/issues well beyond the RPG requests. During its operations, CR hosted 14 meetings of this Multicultural Task Force. As can be seen in agendas and minutes from these meetings (See Appendix D), these sessions were well-attended by representatives from a wide variety of related agencies and services. Meetings generally included 15-20 participants and lasted about 2 hours. To obtain a better feel for the operation of this group, I attended several meetings. On the January 17, 1990 meeting, for example, eighteen professionals representing service agencies, universities, State Health Department, teachers, directors, and parents) were in attendance. The primary agenda item for this particular meeting was consideration of a framework for the continuation of the Task Force after the end of CR funding. Because of enthusiasm established through CR, the group unanimously supported continuance of the Task Force. In their effort to continue to address the issues of the culturally/linguistically diverse populations, the task force agreed to the following plan of action: (1) To continue regularly scheduled meetings to be held at related facilities (e.g. The Native American Center) in the Western New York area (dates for 2

meetings after the conclusion of CR have been agreed upon) (2) The committee agreed to mount a major public awareness campaign to inform teachers of the work of this on-going committee and support available. The committee further agreed to publicize efforts by working to get presentation of its work accepted at programs of professional meetings such as local and regional conferences of groups such as the Association for Childhood Education International, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. (3) This meeting concluded with discussion of ideas for establishment of a permanent and continuing center for housing and up-dating multicultural information and materials. It was decided maximal use could be obtained by housing existing CR materials in a multicultural resource room at the West Side office of the Language Development Program. From this location materials can be disseminated to the community at large and expanded. (Resources developed/obtained through CR are provided in Appendix E.) Finally, a major resource to be housed and updated at this location is a current listing of "Cultural Informants" with expertise in a variety of cultures (especially those with expertise with increasing numbers of clients from low-incidence cultural backgrounds (e.g. Bengali, Arabic, Asian).

Problems/Issues

Two primary problems emerged in relation to Goal 4. First of all, there was a scarcity of commercially availability materials that specifically addressed the needs of service providers working with C/LD young children with special needs. Secondly, problems resulted from the complexity of sharing single-copy materials, especially classroom materials, among 8 different agencies so that they could be previewed prior to purchase.

AGENCY EVALUATION OF CROSSROADS

As described earlier, CR utilized a transagency approach to providing optimal support to C/LD children and their families. Success of the project was, therefore, necessarily linked to its ability to develop effective linkages with the 8 cooperating agencies. In order to obtain an idea of the extent to which CR achieved its goals through the transagency format, an interview schedule (see Appendix F) was developed and administered to representatives of each cooperating service agency. A summary of agency responses are presented under each question below.

1. Describe problems/issues associated with C/LD children prior to CR.

Below is a sample of agency comments regarding pre-CR problems experienced in providing services to C/LD children:

(Difficulty/inability to serve children from C/LD backgrounds, including assessments, staff recruitment, parent involvement, instructional methods.

We experienced numerous difficulties in conducting assessments and interpreting results with C/LD children.

Communication with families was very limited.

Great difficulties accessing resources with expertise in working with cultures other than Hispanics and those able to interpret assessments.

Our community had no other services to help with referral concerns for children and families who were culturally diverse.

We were unable to provide valid evaluations due to language barriers. We did not have translators to conduct parent interviews. Keeping parents of C/LD children informed of progress, procedures, concerns etc. was difficult staff was not always sensitive to cultural differences although diversity was recognized.

(Inability to communicate with parents, parents feeling isolated, confused about availability of services.

Poor or no understanding of problems/issues faced by C/LD students in English dominant classrooms. In addition, our staff had no knowledge of how to begin to evaluate students in their native (dominant) language.

Overall awareness of the needs of bilingual children were not realized prior to CR. The community was not sensitive to their culture and the manner in which a child with a second language needs to learn.

As can be seen from the above, cooperating agencies were quite vocal in their discussion of problems/issues associated with their C/LD children prior to CR. Specific areas of difficulty were most consistent with the service delivery model developed by CR, i.e. services to children, families, and agency staff. Concerning children, agencies expressed a great deal of distress in not being able to adequately assess the needs of C/LD children. Since assessments with very young children necessitate a great deal of verbal interchange, prior to CR, agencies expressed difficulty in obtaining valid and reliable assessments.

(Perhaps even more important than being able to obtain valid assessments was conveying delicate information to parents/families. All agencies expressed concern for the importance of working with families. Yet, without an understanding of vastly diverse cultural sensitivities, agency goals for children were often seriously undermined.

(Finally, 6 of the 8 cooperating agencies indicated that prior to CR, their staff was either unprepared or minimally prepared to address the special needs of increasing numbers of C/LD children in their care.

2. OVERALL, How satisfied are you with the services you have received through CR?

To assist with analysis of responses to the above, 4 points were assigned to the response "Very Satisfied" 3 points to "Somewhat Satisfied," 2 points to "Somewhat Unsatisfied" and 1 point was assigned to "Very Unsatisfied." From the 8 responses, an average satisfaction rate of 3.6 was obtained. More specifically, 4 agencies indicated they were "Very Satisfied" with CR, 1 indicated they were between "Very Satisfied and Satisfied" and 3 indicated they were "Satisfied." Thus, measuring overall success by the degree to which CR supported agencies in responding more appropriately to the special needs of C/LD preschool children, agencies felt a great deal of success was achieved.

3. Rate and discuss the overall effectiveness and promises/problems associated with the following CR components.

Staff Services

(Using the same 1-4 (Very Satisfied-Very Unsatisfied) scale described above, the average rating for this component was 3.44 which indicated a high degree of satisfaction with this portion of the CR Model. Three agencies indicated they were "Very Satisfied" with CR, 1 indicated they were between "Very Satisfied and Satisfied" and 4 indicated they were "Satisfied."

In addition to the above overall rating, the following comments suggest a number of promises/problems associated with CR staff services.

Inservice programs were excellent, especially multicultural orientation sessions by Dr. Metz (Director) and Spanish classes. Direct support from classroom consultant Alexia Rodriguez was valuable to staff for the curriculum development. Problems related to weakness in CR ability to service "lower incidence" groups. Their strength was Hispanic culture/language. At times we were frustrated on the slowness in receiving Crossroad's evaluations of individual children. Our staff expressed frustration that sometimes their opinions/concerns were overlooked by CR. A major problem is recruitment of staff from a variety of cultures. In particular, our efforts to recruit Spanish speaking staff was frustrating. It may have been very helpful in the long run for CR to have some linkage with high schools to provide career information/incentives to help form linkages with post high school training programs as well as agencies.

The excellent parent partners (cultural informants) were one of the keys to our success! They were always willing to work with staff and model ways of dealing with C/LD children and families. The concerns of our staff were always given consideration in planning and inservice training or presentations.

We had hoped for more contact with the CR staff regarding technical assistance as it pertained to cultural validation within the physical classroom environment, and instructional content in regard to teacher-parent relationships particularly with low-incidence cultures.

There was very positive feedback from staff members with regards to special in-service programs provided to staff. Perhaps most well-received was the "Introduction to Spanish" workshops and the workshop that offered staff the opportunity to speak with adults of various cultural backgrounds.

I feel that CR did a thorough job with regard to case management. I wish the process would have been quicker. There was a large gap in time between the administration of a screening and its scoring.

Inservices provided to staff on site of program were most beneficial.

Geographic area was so large, meetings had to be changed and re-scheduled. Chautauqua County didn't profit from CR as much as Erie Co. due to distance.

Promises

Agencies were unanimous in asserting that a great deal of benefit was derived through inservice programs provided to agency staff. These inservice programs dealt with topics such as : C/LD populations, bilingual/cultural diversities, cultural impact on learning and development, and multicultural ESL short course. Respondents were especially impressed with a short course in conversational Spanish. Other inservices of special value were those designed to help staff better understand nuances of children with lower-incidence cultures (e.g. Laos, Arabic and Asian).

Another major promise was the help provided to staff by the "parent partners." These people were viewed as extremely helpful in providing direct support with teachers in the classroom and providing insights in the child's culture which was especially helpful in planning more effective educational programs.

Problems

Agency representatives were quick to point out that not enough help (especially direct technical assistance and follow-up in the classroom) was provided for children from low-incidence

(cultures. Clearly, obtaining appropriate parent-partners for low-incidence cultures required a great deal of effort from CR. By the conclusion of the project, Parent Partners from Laotian, Polish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Cambodian, Hispanic, and African-American cultural backgrounds were identified and used by the program. While a degree of success was achieved in obtaining the above partners, it is nevertheless, clear that in a city where over 70 different languages are spoken, a need exists for Parent Partners from other low-incidence backgrounds(e.g. Russian).

Another problem discussed by 2 of the agencies involved delay in getting evaluations back from CR. More prompt responses to evaluations would certainly be helpful to agency staff. Yet, as described earlier, CR had an extremely limited staff. Given the unanticipated demand for services to the C/LD and agency need for greater follow-up in the classroom, future programs would do well to devote expanded resources to this program element.

Services to Children

The average response to rating the overall effectiveness of direct services to children provided by CR was 3.36 (7 responding). This score indicates that agencies were, for the most part, "Very Satisfied" with the array of services to children.

(Comments such as the following are typical of agency reactions to the CR children services component:

Results of evaluations proved valuable. Additional discussion would be needed regarding the instructional strategies used for ESL for young children with speech/language handicaps, particularly when class was not comprised solely of ESL children.

We are extremely satisfied with services in preparation for IEP conferences and in the 1:1 services offered to students.

Our children had no direct contact with CR staff except for brief introductions. Direct services to children were not observed at our agency.

Direct services to children were the least frequent services requested by this agency. CR training and consultation was so readily available that our staff coped well with C/LD children.

(The informants at times were just interpreters and lacked understanding of their role and purpose. It was difficult if they were not professionals and were not inserviced to the reason for early intervention for C/LD children. If they had not provided educational services for children with special needs in there culture, our purpose seemed not very important to them.

(Some referrals for evaluations were not done. Reasons such as "too far" or "too busy" were provided. This was perceived negatively by our staff.

Promises

In discussing this component, service providers were especially pleased with the careful attention to student evaluation, much-needed support with IEP development, and supportive help provided by the cultural informants.

Problems

Although, still perceived as "very effective," this component was rated lowest among the three CR components. Two agencies indicated they observed little or no direct service to their children. Comments such as those described below indicate a great deal of interest in more direct support in the classroom.

(Given the unanticipated extent of problems with C/LD preschool special needs children found early in the program and reported in the Year I Progress Report, a decision was made early in the program to devote greater attention to other less time-intensive program components. While comments such as the above reflect frustrations involved in a program which attempts to provide services to 8 agencies over two expansive counties with 3 full-time staff members and a few part-time personnel, future programs could be enhanced with greater resources devoted to direct services.

Home-family Services

Services to the home-family were rated highest of all of the CR components (3.83 average on 4-point scale). Particular promises are abstracted from comments such as the following:

Services were considered helpful in that there was readily available assistance to provide interpreter services and to accompany staff to home visits and for parents to center appointments. Valuable also in the additional information provided regarding the dominant language and culture of the home.

Language informants for a Cantonese child was very helpful.

We benefited particularly from CR willingness to make home visits and deal with "sensitive" issues.

(Cantonese family received good services but families in Chatauqua County did not profit from services.

Promises

Interpreter services provided by language/cultural informants and parent partners were viewed as extremely helpful elements of CR. Given research support for the importance of families in a child's overall development and the effectiveness of this component as judged by service providers, continuation of this aspect of the model seems especially beneficial in future programs.

Problems

As viewed by cooperating agencies, the primary problem concerning this component was perhaps best described in the comment "Perhaps greatest problem concerning this component is that CR services are no longer readily available!"

4. Of services provided to you by CR, which was MOST helpful to your service delivery system? Why?

Below are a sample of agency comments reflecting the above views:

Staff services were the most helpful. Although we did not call often on CR to do much with our individual families, as an agency, we felt better equipped to provide services because of the increase in awareness of issues surrounding the culturally diverse populations. The training and information shared through out meetings as well as the direct services of transcribing forms and letters for non-English speaking parents.

Home and family services were of greatest value. Communication with families was greatly facilitated. Families entered program with a clearer understanding due to CR efforts during initial visits to the school and later with IEP meetings the parents were in true partnership in the development of their child's educational program.

The most beneficial was the service provided to families. It enabled us to improve parent contact, translate correspondence, and help parents understand the special needs of their children.

Cultural Informants were especially helpful since we do not understand the native languages of many of our clients.

The cultural informants to work with individual families. Because it enabled us to possibly avoid offending families and communicate in a more productive manner and provide a more comfortable environment for families.

Inservice programs for staff were most beneficial as they increased the awareness by staff of problems faced by

C/LD children.

CR greatly increased the cultural sensitivity of our agency. It also assisted us in learning about related community programs available and awareness of programs to include the bilingual community.

As can be seen in the above, perceived "most helpful" service provided by CR was evenly split between home/family services and services to staff. Cultural informants provided by CR were consistently mentioned as the major contributor to success with this service.

The remaining 4 agencies suggested services to staff were the most helpful. Agencies felt that CR inservice programs and cultural informants were especially effective in raising agency sensitivity to cultural issues and, thereby, resulted in more appropriate programming for children.

5. Which was the LEAST helpful service provided by CR?
Why?

Specific comments concerning perceived least helpful services are provided below:

Expertise in a broader range of cultures.

Lack of flexibility in transporting parents. Families could have participated more fully and at a more comfortable level if they traveled and arrived with the informant/partners.

Direct services to children were least frequently utilized because training by CR staff made us feel so competent!

We had hoped for more contact with the CR staff regarding technical assistance as it pertained to cultural validation within the physical classroom environment, and instructional content in regard to teacher-parent relationships particularly with low-incidence cultures.

Because we did not utilize very much, difficult to answer this question. We are a birth through 21 agency. We may have utilized some services more for our 5-21 group. CR was more the preschool focus.

Two agencies felt that direct services to children in the classroom was the least helpful service. Although least helpful, one director felt that the extremely effective staff training made their staff feel competent enough to implement more effective instruction. Another agency directors, felt that CR was tremendously supportive with tasks such as IEP development of C/LD children. Yet, they felt the goals of these documents could have been better supported if Crossroad's staff could have assisted staff members in-class implementation of IEPs.

Two agencies felt that although CR was extremely helpful with Hispanics who composed the majority of clients in need, more

help was needed with services to increasing numbers of lower-incidence cultures (e.g. Asians, Arabic, Laos). In the final year of the project, CR was productive in obtaining cultural informants for lower-incidence cultural groups.

One agency felt that CR could have been more helpful in providing transportation support, i.e. transporting parents to/from needed services in the company of informants/partners. Parent comments also tend to support the potential benefit of greater services in this area. While resources were not available to provide greater support in the current project, this service does appear to offer benefit for future projects.

6. What are some things that could have helped you utilize CR more effectively?

A number of suggestions were made by co-sponsoring agencies to make future programs more effective. As was quickly observed at the onset of the grant, the need for services C/LD children was much greater than originally anticipated. Thus, it was not surprising that the cooperating agencies felt even greater gains could have been made with increased CR staff.

7. In the original grant proposal, it was thought that a major need for CR services would be the Black community. Why did you make so few referrals from this group?

In the original grant proposal, it was assumed that a great share of CR resources would be required for use with the Black community. However, very few referrals were Black clients were made. In an attempt to determine reasons for this, the above question was asked of cooperating agencies.

The great diversity of responses regarding this item are reflected in the following agency comments:

While I feel the need for help with the Black community was significant, I don't feel that CR concentrated enough in this area.

Other community resources are in place for this group.

Utilization of a separate agency to deal with issues of the Black Community may serve to hinder rather than help. This seems to imply that a certain "expertise" is needed, and could be insulting to Black staff and families. Staff working in the professions that deal with people have a responsibility to learn to understand different values. This differs from minorities where there is a language barrier.

Initially it wasn't stressed. Also, it would have been helpful if a cultural informant sensitized participating agencies to the strengths, needs and differences in the Black community. Also, our agency is already quite familiar with the poor inner-city areas our families come from.

(Despite efforts of Crossroad's administration, partners and staff seemed ultimately unwilling to accept that children from the Black community could have their differences recognized and still be accepted. There was a tendency to overlook differences in, I believe, an effort to appear accepting.

Our Hispanic community was in much greater need of services.

We attempted to refer numerous African American families. However, the families were not interested, claiming there was no need. Some may have experience service inundation in the home as they were unwilling to permit yet another service provider in the home.

Families have not needed or wanted outside support.

Perhaps because the staff concentrated with the bilingual (primarily Hispanic) community.

(The gamut of responses to this issue raises a number of interesting issues. First of all, the agency with perhaps the largest population of Black preschool children felt that not enough CR resources were afforded Black children. Other agencies felt that even if resources were available, parents from this community were overwhelmed with services for their children and, thus, they were often unwilling to permit help from yet another source. Still others felt that since the language barrier presented by other cultures (e.g. Hispanic, Asian, Arabic) was so much greater, limited resources were more appropriately devoted to Hispanic and lower-incidence cultures. Still others felt that assumed differences between Black and mainstream Anglo culture were actually insulting. While obtaining meaningful closure on which of the above views is more justifiable is beyond the scope of this report, it is certainly an issue which should be considered in future projects.

8. Are you now doing anything different because of CR? If so, what? Please be VERY specific in responding to this question. If, for example, you are more "sensitive" to the needs of C/LD special needs children, in what specific ways are you more sensitive and what are you doing differently because of this sensitivity?

(If success of a project can be measured by actual changes in knowledge and service delivery systems, CR appears to be most effective. First of all, agencies indicated greatly increased sensitivities toward both C/LD children and their families. This increased awareness has, in one case, resulted in the establishment of a continuing program for C/LD special needs preschool children. This new and continuing program modeled after CR was described as follows:

First of all we have established a bilingual (Spanish/English) preschool program, currently a half-day

(session with expansion possible. Secondly, we have hired Spanish speaking special education teachers and a parent partner, as well as a parent partner for African American children and families. Two English speaking staff social workers are receiving training in Spanish and we have hired an additional Spanish speaking social worker from Puerto Rico. An American, but fluently Spanish speaking, speech-language pathologist is also on staff. Thirdly, evaluations of C/LD children are always conducted with an evaluation team member who speaks the language spoken by the parents. Fourthly, all agency parent information is being translated into Spanish. Fifth, we are exploring establishing an Arabic evaluation/classroom program. Finally, we now always provide language intervention primarily in the child's first language.

Major areas of change in other agencies include: recognition of and expanded efforts in recruitment and training of staff to respond to the needs of C/LD special needs children, greater acceptance and recognition of the importance of sensitivity to culturally-specific needs of parents/families, and greater recognition of the value of providing assessments in the child's home language. Such changes are reflected in the following changes noted by agencies:

(More aware of the issues regarding the "pros and cons" of bilingual education. Specifically, more attention is given to determine what the family is comfortable with, to help increase the possibility of follow through at home.

More aggressive bilingual staff recruitment efforts by making contacts directly with the Hispanic community.

Select staff members have increased their proficiency in Spanish

Recognition of need to more thoroughly investigate dominant language in the home. (Utilization of CR Questionnaire)

Increased direct invitations to parents to share in their child's class thereby welcoming all families' cultures in the school.

Underscored the need for bilingual staff.

Developed a listing of persons on staff who are of a culturally diverse background as well as those who are able to interpret for different languages. These resource people are utilized if the need arises.

(We are more aware than ever of the need/responsibility to provide evaluations in the language of the children's home. CR has been very helpful in assisting this school to locate individuals who are speakers of the student's home language. Of equal importance, is the awareness that

(considering the "home-culture" when evaluating a youngster is of the utmost importance.

We have hired Hispanic teachers, assistants and a Hispanic Outreach person to offer services to this population.

We make more of an effort to learn of different ways, styles and preferences of families trying to avoid offending them in interactions, holiday celebrations, and participation of children and families in programs. Attempting to become familiar or at least aware of a number of "little things" that can be so significant in interactions.

We are conducting evaluations in the child's dominant language using interpreters.

We are more observant/aware of cultural differences when speaking to parents at home or in school.

We realize that language informants are critical to success with this population.

- (9. Discuss the effectiveness of the "transagency" format of this project. What specific variables in your agency either helped or made it difficult to respond as you would have liked? What helped you change your responses and what didn't. (e.g.1 release time for inservices/did release time help make internal changes in your agencies? e.g.2 Fiscal agreement as opposed to a cooperative one.?)

As discussed earlier, CR was developed as a demonstration model which was employed to pool resources/needs of cooperating agencies in support of maximizing the growth and development of C/LD special needs preschoolers. Since cooperation among agencies was seen as an important dimension of this model, an attempt was made to determine CR effectiveness in this regard. Comments such as the following reflect a general feeling that the transagency format was a useful one. Furthermore, although released time and financial reimbursement was appreciated, it appeared that CR programs were so motivating in and of themselves that reimbursement was not a major factor.

Shared inservices were valuable although scheduling was difficult. Reimbursing staff by CR to attend sessions was helpful as it gave an extra incentive when sessions could not be scheduled during our standard work hours.

(Transagency concepts was a "fit" for our community in that the majority of agencies already had very positive working relationships, i.e.; Erie County Council on Developmental Disabilities- Subcommittee on Education and the Erie County Provider's Group which meet monthly.

Our agency , being small, offers a great deal of flexibility and enables release time to be offered without a great deal of difficulty. It was wonderful to have inservices provided to our staff and have them be paid also! The programs provided to Speech therapists received rave reviews as did the Spanish classes for other staff members.

Inservices involving many agencies were helpful. The grant made it possible for participants to receive reimbursement which aided attendance.

Transagency format was an excellent concept as skills of an interpreter and home service worker were crucial to the functioning of the family unit. Our staff members participated in inservice programs and meeting release time (fiscal and otherwise) was never a problem.

I really don't believe the release time or fiscal reimbursement had much bearing on attendance. I believe the sessions were attractive enough to fill and the commitment of the agencies involved in meeting such that little thought was given to "Oh, I'm being reimbursed for this."

I personally believe in the "transagency" format. We as an agency, needed to involve other agencies more actively in CR. Release time does help us make internal changes. Perhaps a fiscal or more formal agreement would have helped, but I'm not sure.

Advantages

Perceived advantages of the transagency format are reflected in agency comments such as the following:

The format offers a mechanism for sharing and problem solving with professionals and with other agencies. It contributed to the existing strong communication networks in WNY.

Participants from many agencies involved in inservices made different perspectives apparent.

Sharing of ideas and staff, learning about cultures and ethnic customs, and the use of language competent staff in dealing with culturally diverse families.

Added a more global perspective with regard to issues other agencies were encountering.

A forum for discussion, exchanging of ideas, a way to build cooperation, avoids a duplication of service at the same time assuring equitable distribution of resources and services.

(It made an agency such as Head Start aware of the various agencies which work with children with handicapping conditions.

Individuals who already know each other; could share problems and situations with the entire group which helped "bond" the group. The director handled this format with diplomacy, understanding and a very positive upbeat attitude. She made it work!

As can be seen above, most agencies involved felt that the transagency format was extremely effective in helping each other share both common and differing problems and issues and helping generate more effective plans for dealing with C/LD children.

Disadvantages

Perceived disadvantages of the transagency format are presented below:

By the grant's conclusion, only two participating agencies were taking the most advantage of CR services.

Lack of follow-through.

(Oftentimes, it seemed as though agencies used meeting time to "advertise" rather than share steps taken and explain how issues were resolved. Additionally, when grant funding is housed at one agency, there is a "sense" that the grant program is "owned" by that one specific agency and that that agency is more likely to obtain greater assistance.

Agencies/programs were uncomfortable with ___ being a Lead Agency. There were feelings and perceptions (real or imagined) that prevented the group from being as open as might have been. Nevertheless, ___ was in a position to function as Lead agency where others were not able to do so.

If truly implemented in a transagency format, this approach collectively can be most beneficial. Initially CR began in this fashion but for a variety of reasons was compromised along the way. This format must be tended more. Requires accepting agencies on equal footing.

I don't feel that CR was as transagency as one would think.

(It seemed, though, that only one agency was willing to host training sessions and that was the fiscal sponsor agency. Perhaps other agencies having a fiscal interest would have made a difference.

It may have been a disservice to the transagency format to have CR so embedded within a single, dominant

(agency. At the final CR meeting for example, only the dominant agency reported on how they had changed and which CR services would be absorbed by that agency.

Certainly, by housing any project within a given agency, accessibility of those services provided would be maximized for the sponsoring agency. Perhaps, a decentralized model would be worth examining. For example, 1 day per month, a CR staff member would be assigned to a co-sponsoring agency.

Although agencies were, for the most part, very supportive of advantages which accrue from a transagency format, it is apparent from the above that the format was not without problems. One agency volunteered to serve as the fiscal agent for the project. This necessity, however, appeared to make other agencies feel a bit less a part of the program. Although CR Director held regular Steering Committee meetings which could have been used as a vehicle for discussing such feelings, these feelings were not brought to bear.

(The transagency format of this model was perceived as having a great deal of potential. Nevertheless, it appears that in this case, the necessity of someone assuming fiscal responsibility caused some real or perceived difficulties among a number of the agencies. Given these later feelings, it seems worth the effort of future programs to develop a plan to maintain an environment of perceived equality. The above agency suggestion, for example, that a CR staff member spend one day per month at each agency might mitigate alienated perceptions.

10. How will the absence of CR affect your future ability to support C/LD preschool special needs children?

All agencies expressed concern that optimal services they came to expect from CR would diminish. Yet, because of increased sensitivity to issues raised by the program and a model for responding to these issues, 2 agencies appeared guardedly optimistic about retaining some of the services judged effective. Such guarded optimism is reflected in the following comments:

In isolated instances, as with CR, we will probably not be able to adequately service clients. In most cases, however, we will be able to provide much more appropriate support for our bilingual children since we have expanded our consultant line budget so we can support CR-like services. We will also have to expand our orientation time in using such consultants. Working with families who are CD will take a great deal more time without CR.

(Because we have absorbed so much of the CR program, our major set-back will be the inability to provide mass screenings to C/LD preschool children.

Still other agencies expressed major concerns for providing

(appropriate services in the future. Such concern are expressed below:

All of our services to bilingual children will decrease.

We will now have major difficulties in assessing children's language in Spanish since we have no access to a bilingual Spanish speech/language therapist.

Difficulty in modifying curriculum to meet bilingual (Spanish) needs. We have no access to a preschool bilingual special education teacher.

We will not have availability of interpreters to help conduct child's comprehensive evaluations. Liason between home and school will be difficult especially for those families who can not read or write English. (We have such a case at this very moment).

(At this time, other than children who are from a Hispanic culture, it will be extremely difficult to provide services other than simple translation without CR. That is certainly only a small portion of what the staff, student and family will need to maximize our potential. Thus, in the coming years perhaps our greatest loss will be in the readily available pool of cultural informants which CR so effectively provided.

Although the later agencies will miss CR services, the likelihood is, nevertheless, greater now that they will attempt to find ways to raise community awareness of problems addressed through CR as well as find solutions to improving the plight of C/LD preschool populations. It may well be, for example, that the Multicultural Task Force organized through this project could begin to initiate such actions.

PARENT EVALUATION OF CROSSROADS

(As described above, cooperative agencies strongly supported the Home/Family component of the CR program. To corroborate the effectiveness of this component as well as to obtain parent views concerning the program, 2 parents were interviewed using "CROSSROADS PARENT INTERVIEW" form (see Appendix G.) Parents to be interviewed could not be selected at random because many of them express discomfort directly or indirectly with the formal interview process. Two Hispanic parents who were readily available and who indicated willingness to participate were selected. Parents were interviewed after the end of the grant so parents had nothing to lose by honest responses. Furthermore, to put parents at ease, they were interviewed in their home language (Spanish).

1. What services did you receive from CR?

Parent #1 indicated that CR provided a wide range of

(services: taxi to evaluations, open houses, parent/teacher conferences/interpreters for IEP/IFSP conferences and bilingual speech and language evaluations.

Parent #2 made special note of her "Parent Partner." This friend provided interpretation for the physical therapist during both home based therapy and at school. She also interpreted for IEP conferences and went with the parent to doctors appointments. The Parent partner worked in the classroom with her child. Finally, the Parent Partner accompanied the parent to the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). Parent #2 was especially pleased with the moral support/interpretation services provided in the above services.

2. Overall, how satisfied are you with CR?

On a scale from "Bad" to "Very Good" both parents expressed only the highest of pleasure with Crossroad's services.

3. Do CR staff appear to understand special needs of your people in the U.S.?

Both parents indicated that Crossroad's staff were very familiar with the special needs of their particular cultural group in the U.S.

4. What would have helped you use CR more effectively?

(Both parents were very complementary concerning the program. They offered no suggestions providing greater access to CR services. Specific comments are as follows:

Nothing! I always felt confident with the services (Parent 1).

When I requested her (the Parent Partner's) assistance she always came. I had no difficulty using the services (Parent 2).

5. What do you like MOST about CR?

Again, a great deal of positive feedback was obtained with this item. Specific responses are as follows:

Everything!

When I needed her (the Parent Partner) to interpret on any occasion, she always came. I also liked it a lot that she worked with my baby. Since we speak Spanish at home, he trusted her more.

(6. What difference do you see between the services you received before CR and those you received during the program?

This particular item provide a great deal of insight into

(problems encountered by parents of C/LD children. Parent #1 indicated :

My children wouldn't do anything at the other evaluation center because everything was in English. Also, the people at the other program didn't take time with the children to let them get comfortable (before starting the evaluation).

Parent #2 commented:

[Before CR] I had a lot of difficulty understanding what the teachers said when they spoke to me. I hardly talked at all. When the CR Parent Partner came, I could talk a lot with both her and the teachers. I felt more secure. She (Parent Partner) could ask the therapists and teachers about anything I didn't understand.

7. How did the program help you obtain and better utilize services for your child?

Parent #1 indicated that transportation services provided by CR was the link between receiving and not receiving services for her child. She stated:

(It was easier and quicker to take the taxi provided instead of taking the bus. There were times before CR that I had to cancel appointments because I didn't have money for the bus (Parent 1).

Parent #2 commented that the CR Parent Partner helped her in seeing herself as a teacher of her child. Specifically, CR enabled her to understand her child's training plan and assist with needed home therapy. She commented:

My child was already receiving services before CR. Yet, my Parent Partner helped me learn how to do some of the exercises at home by interpreting for the physical therapist. She also worked with him at school.

Parent #2 also indicated that her CR Parent Partner was especially effective in helping her get badly needed medical attention for her child (especially help with an ear specialist when her child was having trouble with tubes in his ears).

CONCLUSIONS

What Do We Know?

(Over the course of the CR project, a great deal has been learned. Service providers charged with providing optimal services for special needs preschool children have learned that their goal cannot be accomplished without considering the issue of cultural/linguistic diversity. Moreover, it has been shown that such diversity extends far beyond that of Hispanic and Black

(populations traditionally supported. All agencies cooperating with the CR project expressed greater than expected concerns for providing better services to special needs preschoolers from low-incidence cultural groups. Such agency reports as well as demographic data suggest that still greater diversity can be expected in the years ahead.

In an attempt to ameliorate problems associated with appropriately educating rapidly increasing numbers of C/LD special needs preschool children, the CR demonstration model was advanced. This model delineated 4 major goals: (1) development of a comprehensive case management system for C/LD children (2) identification of unserved C/LD preschoolers with handicapping/at-risk conditions (3) provision of support services to families, agency staff and caregivers, and (4) development of a regional resource network for the dissemination of needed information and materials.

Toward achievement of these ends a number of successes have been noted in this report:

Successes

Demonstration Model Continuation

(Often, demonstration projects such as this conclude with submission of the Final Report. With this project, however, the CR model is continuing. In recognition of the problems inherent in providing a service delivery system to C/LD preschool special needs children, the lead agency of the CR program initiated a bilingual preschool program. This program has hired a Spanish speaking special education teachers and two Parent Partners. In addition, 2 English speaking staff social workers are receiving special training in multicultural education and a third social worker from Puerto Rico has been hired. Finally, in this program, evaluations are always conducted with an evaluation team member who speaks the language spoken by the parents and language intervention is provided primarily in the child's first language. This program has, therefore, demonstrated that agencies with significant numbers of children and/or resources, can effectively implement the CR model.

Parent Partner Success

The use of "parent partners" was seen as a unanimous success of this program model. The use of these partners clearly provided access to more valid/reliable assessments and evaluation, improved parent-agency cooperation and provided much greater access for C/LD preschoolers in need of services. The unanimous support for this CR component strongly supports its inclusion in future programs.

Multicultural Task Force Continuation

(In addition to continuing through the lead agency special program and through the increased expertise of better-prepared

(staff, the spirit of CR has continued and promises to expand through the work of the "Multi-cultural Task Force of Western New York" which was developed by CR. This group has had a number of meetings after the conclusion of CR and is currently in the process of developing strategies to assure that problems raised through the work of this project are addressed.

Inservice Training Effectiveness

In addition to the continuation of the CR model in a specially developed program, much of the CR philosophy appears to continue in a great deal of the staff of cooperating agencies. Six of the 8 cooperating agencies, for example, indicated that prior to CR, their staff was ill-prepared to respond to the needs of C/LD preschool special needs children. Largely because of Crossroad's inservice programs and staff support, provision of cultural informants and parent partners, and help in providing more appropriate and valid assessments, they now appear much more confident in providing needed support.

Problems

(Perhaps equally important to having a better idea of what "works" most effectively with C/LD children and their families is sharing those things that "didn't work" or illumination of obstacles to more effective program operation. Such information can assist those attempting to implement such a program. Special problem areas are indicated below:

Continuing a CR-Modeled Program With Limited C/LD Enrollment/Resources

Although CR demonstrated that resources could be pooled and dispersed among several service providers, it also identified significant challenges within this approach. For agencies without sufficient numbers of children and/or resources, CR findings indicate that a more productive approach might include (a) interagency cooperation with more formal agreements between providers and (b) perhaps smaller groups of agencies (the CR group included 8 agencies over a 3 county area).

Start-up and Enrollment Maintenance Problems

(While a CR-modeled program is currently prospering at the lead agency, a number of initial difficulties should be mentioned. First of all, one of the most difficult tasks encountered by this agency in getting this program geared up was one of funding. In New York State, funding for preschool special needs preschoolers is on a per child reimbursement basis. Within this funding framework services cannot be insured until the necessary number of children have been evaluated and placed. Child-find and evaluation services, critical to C/LD populations, are not funded under this framework. Thus, in June one must have enough children placed to warrant the hiring of teaching staff

(in September. This funding variable requires a great deal of identification of C/LD special needs population during the first two start-up years of the program.

Continuous Staff Training

As was reported herein, CR did demonstrate a great deal of success in upgrading staff knowledge. Nevertheless, because of high staff turnover associated with service agencies, continual inservice efforts appear necessary. In addition, with the reported increase in low-incidence cultural groups not yet dealt with, still greater increase even more diverse skills is needed.

Absence of Specialists

Given the importance of language in the educational process, the increasing numbers of C/LD special needs preschoolers identified in this project, and the importance of being able to make valid assessments, a need emerges for services of bilingual speech/language pathologists who specialize in younger children. During the period of this grant only 2 such certified professionals were available in the Western New York Region. Presently, only one is available.

Expense

(In the short run, this type of program is more expensive than other models. Increased expenses are required primarily because of factors such as, IEPs must be completed in both languages, more time is needed to work with families, and teachers must somehow be compensated for extra time required for completing the above activities. While a bit more expensive in the short run, prospects for more expensive remedial services in later years may be lessened by the early identification and appropriate remediation accomplished by this project.

Recruiting Cultural Informants

All parties involved in CR reported great benefits from cultural informants. The success of these individuals was recognized early in the project. Because of this success, a great deal of effort was directed toward recruiting these support personnel from a wide variety of cultures.

Recruitment of Staff

(In order to recruit and retain staff to be effective with C/LD preschoolers, special incentives must be employed. The staff member in charge of the lead agency continuing program, for example, could only be recruited because of significant salary incentives. It is difficult to recruit and train C/LD-trained special education staff nationally. This is especially true for small agencies such as those involved in CR. These smaller agencies cannot compete either in salary or in resources with

larger LEA's. In order to recruit and train staff, therefore, these agencies often need to offer salary incentives such as those described earlier. Since the effectiveness of a program depends on the effectiveness of the very few bilingual special needs preschool teachers in the market, salary and other incentives (e.g. smaller class size) can make a significant difference.

Limitations in Direct Service Delivery

The anticipated focus of the project was upon the C/LD children already in programs. As the extent of the need for unserved children became evident, however, the projects' focus switched to screening and identification. This switch in focus, in turn, constrained the degree of project resources available for direct services. Without added screening and identification services, however, the numbers of non-Black C/LD students was so low in most agencies that the need for direct services would have been minimal.

Recommendations for Replication

Based upon the experiences of this project, a number of recommendations can be made for future programs such as this:

1. At least 3 years are required to develop and implement a program such as CR. Three factors dictate our estimate of this time period: (1) the extensive training required for service providers (2) the necessity for extensive and prolonged recruitment of C/LD staff and informants and (3) the need to establish credibility within C/LD populations, a process which typically requires time and repeated personal contacts.
2. Based upon CR experience, several instructional factors appear critical to successful programming for C/LD children with special needs: (1) At least one bilingual professional should be present in the classroom where children speak little or no English. (2) A bilingual teacher assistant, while certainly useful, cannot perform the same level of language modeling for children--and children quickly associate status with language. In the absence of the availability of a bilingual professional monolingual staff can team with bilingual teachers from other classrooms in order to approximate the desired service. (3) Both teachers and assistants in classrooms with children who are non-native speakers of English should have good knowledge of ESL (English as a Second Language) instructional strategies. (4) For children who are non-native speakers of English and who have in addition been identified as communicably disordered, a bilingual speech pathologist or ESL trained speech language pathologist using a cultural/language mediator/informant is essential.

3. One of the most consistently and highly acclaimed components of this project was the use of cultural/language informants and parent partners. Although quite a bit of effort was expended in recruiting and training such personnel, the efforts expended returned great dividends for all involved.
4. Finally, on the whole, the transagency format of this project appeared highly effective. Nevertheless, special attention is required to make all cooperating agencies feel equally involved. In the case of CR, one agency volunteered to handle fiscal responsibilities for the project. Because of its involvement, the lead agency was perceived by a couple of agencies as receiving a disproportionate amount of CR services. Even with a very skillful and sensitive director, feelings can be hurt without special considerations. It appears that more formal inter-agency agreements are needed so that the proportion of resources allocated to each agency can be clearly established.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A
Theoretical/Philosophical Rationale

Appendix A

Theoretical/Philosophical Rationale

The theoretical/philosophical rationale underlying the CROSSROADS proposal has three major premises:

1. Service providers must take cultural and linguistic factors into account if they are to serve C/LD exceptional children appropriately and effectively. This premise is supported by research from numerous disciplines including psychology, anthropology, education linguistics, and sociology (Adler, 1982; Ambert, 1986; Baca & Cervantes, 1984; Ben-Zeev, 1984; Brantlinger & Guskin, 1985; Cummins, 1984; 1986; Feuerstein, 1979; Grosjean, 1982; Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Hall, 1977; Hilliard, 1980; Learner & Busch-Rossnagel, 1981; Longstreet, 1979; Metz, 1985; Miller, 1984; Plata, 1982; Price-Williams & Gallimore, 1980; Ramirez, 1983; Samora Curry, 1986; Willig & Greenberg, 1986). Researchers from these disciplines have investigated families, children, and schooling practices across many cultures. They point out that roles and rules relevant to such things as language use, interaction, child rearing practices, and learning/teaching strategies are artifacts of specific sociocultural contexts. When service providers and service receivers hold diverse roles and rules--as often happens when they come from diverse cultural groups--miscommunication is heightened and service goals are easily frustrated. As a result, needed services may not be benefited from and existing problems may be compounded.

2. It is important to impact not only on the content of service delivery, but also on its context. Cummins (1986) presents support for this premise, as do Price-Williams & Gallimore (1980). These researchers point out the importance of reciprocal relationships between service providers and minority students and families; relationships based on two-way communication and a recognition of each other's values and strengths. Cummins maintains that it may well be the absence or presence of such relational contexts for services that determines the successor failure of a particular service or service model. CROSSROADS' transagency design was developed to enhance the development of such relationships between area service providers and C/LD families with handicapped or at-risk children. Three features were built into this design for this purpose:

(a) incorporation of CROSSROADS' services into the main service stream. This integration communicates value and respect to minority service recipients by involving service providers in a mutual process of adaptation, rather than placing the stress of adaptation solely on the often already overstressed family and child.

(b) utilization of the entire range of existing services. By providing C/LD parents with access to a variety of service models across the same range of services as are available to

(other parents of exceptional children, CROSSROADS facilitates provision of appropriate services in all contexts. Parents can, thus, establish linkages that can continue beyond the federally funded period.

(c) training of all participating service providers, whether bilingual or not. Provision of this training enables these providers to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to establish effective relationships with C/LD exceptional children and their families.

3. All persons benefit from an increased understanding of each others; environments. This third premise is borrowed from the ALERTA multicultural curriculum (Williams and DeGaetano, 1980), one of four early childhood curricula validated for use with C/LD preschoolers. The gift of a multicultural perspective is its focus on the balance between persons as uniquely individual, and persons as members of social groups with common languages and cultures. CROSSROADS' supports the need to maintain this balance so that language and culture may be valued, and valuable, resources for all persons.

Appendix B
Recollections of a Parent Partner

Appendix B

Recollections of a Parent Partner

Note: The following is a direct transcript of a CR Parent Partner asked to describe her experiences over the project, mentioning problems and issues.

During the three years CR, I visited approximately 70 families. Visits with the families went very well. The only thing that sometimes created a little difficulty was when the family didn't have a phone. In cases like that, we would send the family a letter with a date for a possible home visit, and ask them to call if the date was not convenient. For the most part the families were very good about letting us know if it was convenient or not. When we made the home visit if no one was home, we would leave a note and ask them to call so that we could make other arrangements.

I made many home visits for the purpose of suggesting that a child be referred for a full speech and language evaluation. Some parents already suspected something was wrong. Some weren't really sure anything was wrong, but agreed to the evaluation because they said this way they would know for sure if there was or wasn't a problem.

There were only 4 or 5 parents that refused to have their child evaluated and only one that after having the child evaluated decided she didn't want him in a program.

Whenever, there were appointments for evaluations, we would call the parent the day before to remind them of the appointment and to make arrangements for transportation. We found that by providing transportation, we have very few no shows. Transportation was very essential especially for those appointments that were very far from their home, because the majority of our families don't have their own transportation. With some families, we would meet them at their home to wait for a taxi, then follow them to the appointment and back home again. Some parents were a little nervous about going to an area which they were not familiar with. As a parent once told me "How do I know he's (taxi driver) taking me to the right place." For some families that live in the lower west side, their community is everything. Its where they shop, where they go to church, where they get their medical attention. In their community they can go just about anywhere and feel comfortable. I'm not saying all families were like that but some were. There were some parents, on the other hand, that would go anywhere, just give them directions. or the bust routes. These parents though have been in the states longer, so they're notso hesitant about getting around on their won.

Being able to speak Spanish really helped in putting the family at ease when we first met. Some families like to socialize before or after we discussed the reason for being there. They liked to offer you coffee or something else to drink. If you didn't accept what they offered they would be offended. So it is very important that you accept what you are

